

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, VS, US

SUBJECT: NAVAL VESSELS TO VIET-NAM

THE WHITE HOUSE IS INFORMING CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP
OF THE MOVEMENT OF NAVAL VESSELS IN ACCORDANCE WITH
THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

BEGIN QUOTE

THE PRESIDENT WANTED ME TO ADVISE YOU OF THE FOLLOWING:

IN RESPONSE TO THE APPEALS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM AND BECAUSE OF THE EXTREMELY
GRAVE NATURE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES INVOLVING THE LIVES OF
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES, THE UNITED STATES IS
TAKING THE FOLLOWING ACTION:

1. THE PRESIDENT HAS ORDERED U.S. PARTICIPATION IN A NAVAL
EVACUATION EFFORT OFF THE COAST OF VIET-NAM TO ASSIST
IN THE TRANSPORT OF REFUGEES.

2. OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE REFUGEE EVACUATION IS PART
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OF AN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RELIEF EFFORT. AT THIS

POINT A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES, INCLUDING AUSTRALIA, THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA, THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE.

3. UNITED STATES NAVAL VESSELS, PRINCIPALLY CONSISTING OF TRANSPORT SHIPS, WILL ENTER VIET-NAM WATERS IN ORDER TO PICK UP REFUGEES BEING FERRIED OUT FROM THE COAST. I AM ADVISED, HOWEVER, OUR VESSELS WILL STAND OFF SHORE, AND NOT PARTICIPATE IN HOSTILITIES.

4. UNDER THE PRESENT PLAN A GROUP OF FOUR TRANSPORT VESSELS WILL LEAVE THEIR PACIFIC BASES FOR VIET-NAM WATERS TO UNDERTAKE THIS TASK. THE STEAMING TIME FOR THE CLOSEST VESSEL IS ESTIMATED TO BE A DAY AND A HALF, I AM INFORMED. END QUOTE

2. FOLLOWING RESPONSES TO POSSIBLE QUESTION ARE ALSO INCLUDED IN THE GUIDELINES:

BEGIN QUOTE

Q: IS THIS CONSULTATION UNDER THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION?

A: SECTION 3 OF THE RESOLUTION REQUIRES CONSULTATION ONLY WHEN UNITED STATES FORCES ARE TO BE INTRODUCED INTO HOSTILITIES OR CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE HOSTILITIES ARE IMMINENT. THAT IS NOT THE CASE HERE. HOWEVER, WE ARE INFORMING THE CONGRESS OF OUR ACTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERAL SPIRIT OF THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION. THIS IS A HUMANITARIAN EFFORT IN WHICH INVOLVEMENT IN HOSTILITIES WILL BE AVOIDED.

Q: WILL THE SHIPS FIRE BACK IF FIRED UPON?

A: NO, IF THERE IS ANY SERIOUS RISK FROM HOSTILE FIRE, THEY WILL WITHDRAW.

Q: DOES OUR ACTION VIOLATE THE STATUTE PROHIBITING UNITED STATES MILITARY FORCES IN INDOCHINA SINCE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AUGUST 1973?

A: NO. THE STATUTE PROHIBITING U.S. MILITARY FORCES IN INDOCHINA IS DESIGNED TO PREVENT U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN HOSTILITIES. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN THIS HUMANITARIAN RELIEF OPERATION WILL NOT BE INVOLVED IN HOSTILITIES.

Q: DOES THE UNITED STATES ACTION VIOLATE THE 1973
AGREEMENT ON ENDING THE WAR AND RESTORING PEACE IN
VIET-NAM?

A: WHERE REFUGEES HAVE BEEN FORCED TO FLEE BY NORTH
VIETNAMESE FORCES, WHOSE ACTIONS CONSTITUTE A

MASSIVE VIOLATION, WE ARE NOT BOUND TO REFRAIN FROM
HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS TO ASSIST THOSE REFUGEES.
END QUOTE KISSINGER

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